Title 440 - Conservation Programs Manual Wetlands Reserve Program

Exhibit 514.62

Clean Water Act, Section 404, National Permit for Stream and Wetland Restoration Activities

Authorizes wetland restoration or creation activities on private lands if done under an agreement with FWS or NRCS. There is no longer a need for individual 404 permits for most wetlands restoration.

Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit NO. 27 as published in the <u>Federal Register/NWP</u> Final Notice, 61FR 12888, paragraph 27, Nationwide Permits and reads as follows:

WETLAND AND RIPARIAN RESTORATION AND CREATION ACTIVITIES.

Activities in waters of the United States associated with the restoration of former waters, the enhancement of degraded tidal and non-tidal wetlands and riparian area, the creation of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and riparian areas and the restoration and enhancement of non-tidal streams and non-tidal open water areas as follows:

- (a) The activity is conducted on:
- (1) Non-Federal public lands and private lands, in accordance with the terms and conditions of a binding wetland enhancement, restoration, or creation agreement between the landowner and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or voluntary wetland restoration, enhancement, and creation actions documented by the NRCS pursuant to NRCS regulations; or
- (2) Any Federal land; or
- (3) Reclaimed surface coal mined lands, in accordance with a Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act permit issued by the Office of Surface Mining or the applicable state agency (the future reversion does not apply to streams or wetlands created, restored, or enhanced as mitigation for the mining impacts, nor naturally due to hydrologic or topographic features, nor for a mitigation bank); or
- (4) Any private or public land;
- (b) Notification: For activities on any private or public land that are not described not paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) above, the permittee must notify the District Engineer in accordance with General Condition 13; and
- (c) Only native plant species should be planted at the site, if permittee is vegetating the project site. Activities authorized by this NWP include, but are not limited to: the removal of accumulated sediments; the installation, removal, and maintenance of small water control structures, dikes, and berms; the installation of current deflectors; the enhancement, restoration, or creation of riffle and pool stream structure; the placement of in-stream habitat

structures; modifications of the stream bed and/or banks to restore or create stream meanders; the backfilling of artificial channels and drainage ditches; the removal of existing drainage structures; the construction of small nesting islands; the construction of open water areas; activities needed to reestablish vegetation, including plowing or discing for seed bed preparation; mechanized land clearing to remove undesirable vegetation; and other related activities.

This NWP does not authorize the conversion of a stream to another aquatic use, such as the creation of an impoundment for waterfowl habitat. This NWP does not authorize stream channelization. This NWP does not authorize the conversion of natural wetlands to another aquatic use, such as creation of waterfowl impoundments where a forested wetland previously existed. However, this NWP authorizes the relocation of non-tidal waters, including non-tidal wetlands, on the project site provided there are net gains in aquatic resource functions and values. For example, this NWP may authorize the creation of an open water impoundment in a non-tidal emergent wetland, provided the non-tidal emergent wetland is replaced by creating that wetland type on the project site. This NWP does not authorize the relocation of tidal waters or the conversion of tidal waters, including tidal wetlands, to other aquatic uses, such as the conversion of tidal wetlands into open water impoundments.Reversion. For enhancement, restoration, and creation projects conducted under paragraphs (a)(2) and (a)(4), this NWP does not authorize any future discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the reversion of the area to its prior condition. In such cases a separate permit would be required for any reversion. For restoration, enhancement, and creation projects conducted under paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(3), this NWP also authorizes any future discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the reversion of the area to its documented prior condition and use (i.e., prior to the restoration, enhancement, or creation activities) within five years after expiration of a limited term wetland restoration or creation agreement or permit, even if the discharge occurs after this NWP expires. This NWP also authorizes the reversion of wetlands that were restored, enhanced, or created on prior-converted cropland that has not been abandoned, in accordance with a binding agreement between the landowner and NRCS or FWS (even though the restoration, enhancement, or creation activity did not require a Section 404 permit). The five-year reversion limit does not apply to agreements without time limits reached under paragraph (a)(1). The prior condition will be documented in the original agreement or permit, and the determination of return to prior conditions will be made by the Federal agency or appropriate State agency executing the agreement or permit. Prior to any reversion activity, the permittee or the appropriate Federal or State agency must notify the District Engineer and include the documentation of the prior condition. Once an area has reverted back to its prior physical condition, it will be subject to whatever the Corps regulatory requirements will be at that future data. (Sections 10 and 404) Note: Compensatory mitigation is not required for activities authorized by this NWP, provided the authorized work results in a net increase in aquatic resource functions and values in the project area.

This NWP can be used to authorize compensatory mitigation projects, including mitigation banks, provided the permittee notifies the District Engineer in accordance with General Condition 13, and the project includes compensatory mitigation for impacts to waters of the United States caused by the authorized work. However, this NWP does not authorize the reversion of an area used for a compensatory mitigation project to its prior condition. NWP 27 can be used to authorize impacts at a mitigation bank, but only in circumstances where it has been approved under the interagency Federal Mitigation Banks Guidelines.